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SHEAFFER JEANNE M
78 GEORGETOWN 4452

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ACTION ARA-15
INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-06 CA-01 PA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 ICA-20 SP-02 SS-15 NSC-05
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWER BA DATE
RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE
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ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
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PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

P 271055Z DEC 78
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9566
UNCLAS GEORGETOWN 4452
C O R R E C T E D C O P Y TEXT (PARA 4 LINE 8)
E.O. 12065: NA
TAGS: OVIP, (LOWERY, JOSEPH DR.)
SUBJ: VISIT BY SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
LEADERS TO GUYANA.
REF: STATE 315208
1. DR. JOSEPH LOWERY, PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, ACCOMPANIED BY REVERENDS SMITH
AND GIBSON, ARRIVED IN GUYANA JUST AFTER MIDNIGHT DECEMBER 19.
EMBASSY HAD ARRANGED TO HAVE THEM MET BY A POLITICAL OFFICER
WHO ESCORTED THEM TO THEIR HOTEL. ARRANGEMENTS HAD ALSO
BEEN MADE WITH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO EXPEDITE
THEIR ENTRY THROUGH CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION.
2. AMBASSADOR, DCM, AND PAO MET WITH THE THREE CLERGYMEN AT 10:15
A.M. DEC. 20 TO DISCUSS THEIR SCHEDULE AND TO PROVIDE BACKGROUND
INFORMATION ON JONESTOWN. AMBASSADOR THEN ARRANGED WITH
THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO HAVE THE GROUP RECEIVED
BY MINISTER OF INFORMATION SHIRLEY FIELD-RIDLEY. LATER, ON
DECEMBER 20, THEY SPOKE WITH POLICE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER ROBERTS,
SOME OF THE JONESTOWN SURVIVORS, AND
MADE CONTACT WITH THE GUYANA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (THIS
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APPOINTMENT WAS SET UP BY THE PAO).
3. THE GROUP HAD HOPED
TO TRAVEL TO JONESTOWN ON DECEMBER 21 AND SPACE WAS MADE
AVAILABLE TO THEM ON THE U.S. ARMY HELICOPTERS STILL IN
COUNTRY. HOWEVER, DUE TO A TROPICAL STORM THIS FLIGHT
WAS FORCED TO TURN BACK AND RETURN TO GEORGETOWN. GROUP SPENT
THE REST OF THE DAY TALKING TO THE FOREIGN PRESS CORPS AND
OTHERS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT PEOPLES TEMPLE AND JONESTOWN.
4. ON THE MORNING OF DECEMBER 22 REVEREND LOWERY AND
HIS TWO COMPANIONS FLEW BY CHARTERED AIRCRAFT TO PORT KAITUMA
ACCOMPANIED BY CONSUL HARVEY CASH. (THE USA HELICOPTERS TERMINATED
THEIR MISSION IN GUYANA AND WERE BEING DISMANTLED AND RETURNED
TO SOUTHCOM DECEMBER 22.) GROUP WAS MET AT PORT KAITUMA AIRPORT
BY ASSISTANT DISTRICT OFFICER'S LAND ROVER AND
PROCEEDED TO JONESTOWN, GETTING BADLY STUCK ONLY ONCE.
AT JONESTOWN GROUP MET JONESTOWN CONSERVATOR EMERSON SIMON.
CONSUL CASH REPORTS THAT VISITORS WERE ABLE TO SEE AS MUCH
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AS THEY WISHED OF JONESTOWN.
5. ON DECEMBER 23 DR. LOWERY AND ASSOCIATES CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM, WHOM THEY FOUND "CORDIAL AND IMPRESSIVE," AND DEPARTED GEORGETOWN FOR NEW YORK VIA PA-227 WITH ASSISTANCE FROM EMBOFF AND MFA DEPUTY CHIEF OF PROTOCOL.
6. DR. LOWERY GAVE AN INTERVIEW BROADCAST OVER STATE-OWNED RADIO, AND HE AND ASSOCIATES RECEIVED PROMINENT COVERAGE IN THE DAILY PRESS. DR. LOWERY IS QUOTED IN THE DECEMBER 22 GOVERNMENT-OWNED "CHRONICLE" AS STATING THAT SCLC PROBE INTO THE JONESTOWN AFFAIRS IS NOT A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION BUT MORE "OF A PASTORAL KING OF THING" TO
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EXAMINE "WHY WOULD SO MANY AMERICANS WANT TO LEAVE THE 'LAND OF THE BRAVE AND FREE' (SIC) AND GO TO LIVE IN THE JUNGLE? BOTH THE CHURCH AND THE NATION WOULD NOW HAVE TO DEAL WITH THESE QUESTIONS." ON DECEMBER 23, FOLLOWING THE GROUP'S VISIT TO JONESTOWN, THE "CHRONICLE" REPORTED THAT THE THREE SCLC LEADERS "ARE TREMENDOUSLY IMPRESSED WITH THE EXPERIMENT THAT WAS JONESTOWN." DR. LOWERY DESCRIBED JONESTOWN AS A "HUGE BANK IN TEH WILDERNESS IN WHICH PEOPLE DEPOSITED DREAMS AND WITHDREW ONLY NIGHTMARES.... I JUST CANNOT HELP BUT ADMIRE HOW THEY CUT OUT AN EXTENSIVE AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT OUT OF THE JUNGLE AND DEVELOPED IT INTO JONESTOWN. WHERE IT WENT WRONG IS PERHAPS ONE OF THE GREAT TRAGEDIES OF OUR TIME." IN CONCLUSION, DR. LOWERY IS REPORTED TO HAVE
EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE GUYANESE GOVERNMENT WOULD SOME DAY BE ABLE
TO USE THE FACILITIES AT JONESTOWN WHICH WOULD AGAIN BECOME "A LIVING COMMUNITY. I HOPE THIS WILL BE DONE SO THAT THOSE WHO DIED WOULD NOT HAVE DIED IN VAIN."
DWYER
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